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Fig. 1. Showing position of club in left hand

GOLF SIMPLIFIED

Cause and Effect

BY

DAVE HUNTER

ILLUSTRATED

FROM

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PREFACE

WHEN I was a boy, I had a wonderful opportunity to learn the game of golf. My father, "Charley" Hunter, was then in charge of the links at Prestwick, Scotland, one of the very best courses in existence, so I learned to play under ideal conditions.

It might be of interest to note that my father remained in charge right up to his recent death (on January 24, 1921), and at that time was the oldest golf professional in the world.

Later on, when I began to think about taking up the teaching of golf as a profession, my father told me that there was one thing to which

little attention had been given, and which above all others would help me in teaching. That one thing was the pronating!—or, the proper turning of the wrists and forearms at the beginning of the swing.

That was about twenty-five years ago, and ever since then I have included that theory in my method of teaching, but until recently, only as an incidental. Some years ago I decided to make a special study of this idea, and to make some experiments. As a result of these, my teaching now consists of absolutely nothing but this one idea. I have proved to my entire satisfaction that not only is it the most important point, but that it is practically all there is to the game of golf. I have experimented with beginners and with players of years of standing, with young boys, elderly men, and with

ladies, and without exception I have found this a cure-all for their troubles. It is a very simple little thing, and one which, if given a little thought, will, I think, be a real help to golfers.

My purpose now is to begin by describing, in as simple a manner as possible, the correct grip, stance, and swing—or in other words the correct way to play golf—and then to dwell on the most common faults of the golfer, and by analyzing these, to show why they are made, and how they can be prevented.

FOREWORD

ASSUMING that the reader is a beginner, there are three important things to consider in learning how to hit a golf ball correctly—the grip, the stance, and the swing.

"The grip" means the method of holding the club in the hands, and the relative control of each hand.

"The stance" means the position of the feet in relation to the ball, and the proper distribution of weight on each foot.

"The swing" means the complete movement of hands, wrists, arms, body, legs, and feet from the time the stance is taken until the ball has been hit and the swing completed.

These will be dealt with in the following chapters.

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GOLF SIMPLIFIED

CAUSE AND EFFECT

GOLF SIMPLIFIED
CAUSE AND EFFECT

THE GRIP

THERE are three well-known, orthodox grips: the "V" grip, in which the hands do not in any way overlap; the "Interlock," in which the first finger of the left hand and the fourth finger of the right hand interlock; and the "Overlap," or "Vardon" grip. As the last-named is the most popular, I would recommend it, and will go more fully into the details of it. I wish here to have it clearly understood, particularly by those who already have adopted one of the other grips, that while I prefer the "Vardon" I do not by any means insist on it nor do I say that it is better than any other.

It is a case of each to his own taste, and I prefer the "Vardon."

The "Vardon" Grip. Lay the club diagonally across the left hand, as shown in Fig. 1, and close the hand so that the grip is almost entirely in the last three fingers—the first finger and thumb should just lie on the club; get the hand around the shaft, so that when the clubhead is on the ground you can just see the knuckle at base of fourth finger—the thumb, meanwhile lying flat down on the shaft, the correct position being neither on the top nor on the side of the shaft, but midway between (see Fig. 2). Then lay the right hand on the club so that the fourth finger rests either between the first and second fingers of the left hand or on top of the first finger, and the left thumb lies in the centre of the right palm. Now close the hand so

that again the grip is in the last three fingers—the first finger and thumb resting lightly on the shaft and the first finger slightly separated from the others. The thumb should easily and comfortably take its position as before mentioned, midway between the top and the side of the shaft. (See Figs. 3 and 4.)

The left should always be the controlling hand and consequently should grip the club tighter than the right, so the grip with the right hand must be comparatively easy.

The right being naturally the stronger hand, care must be taken to prevent its taking control, and herein lies one advantage of the "Vardon" grip.

The fourth finger of the right hand does not touch the club at all; and the thumb and first finger only slightly, consequently one is not so

likely to take control from the left hand, where it belongs.

The same method of gripping the club is applicable to all the clubs and to every shot.

As already stated, the left hand should grip the club much more tightly than the right, and complete control should be retained in the left.

If there is any fault in the relative strength of the grip of the two hands, in nine cases out of ten it will be found that the right is being held too tightly, and for this reason I have dwelt on the importance of gripping only lightly with the right.

There are some people, however, whose wrists or fingers are unusually weak. This is frequently the case with ladies, and occasionally with men. For such people it will be found necessary to let the right hand

grip a little tighter than the foregoing instructions would indicate, but even then care must be taken not to take the control away from the left hand.

THE STANCE

THERE are four different stances: one for very full shots such as are made with the wooden clubs; one for long iron shots such as are made with a mid iron; one for mashie pitches; and one for chip shots.

For wooden club shots, I prefer what is known as the "square" stance. If you will look at Fig. 5, which illustrates the stance for this shot, you will see two straight lines drawn, one parallel with and the other at right angles to the line of play. The point of intersection represents the position of the ball. You will note that both feet are equidistant from the parallel line (although in the foreshortening of the photograph the right foot seems somewhat advanced) and that the

right-angle line almost touches the left heel.

To get the distance of feet from ball, lay clubhead on ground, touching ball as in figure and stand so that, with knees slightly bent and hands held low, the elbows are close to but not touching the body.

After finding, as explained above, the relative position of feet and ball, take your stance, with toes slightly turned out, with weight mostly on heels and equally distributed on both feet, and with knees slightly bent.

The stance for long-iron shots differs from the stance for those played with wooden clubs only in that the right foot is slightly advanced, i.e. nearer the parallel line by about five inches (see Fig. 6).

For high-pitched mashie shots the right foot is still farther advanced,

the difference in this case being about ten inches (see Fig. 7).

For chip shots the stance is very "open," the right foot being about twelve inches farther forward than the left (see Fig. 8). You will also note that in playing the chip shot it is necessary to stand much closer to the ball.

The reason for these different stances is explained in the next chapter, dealing with the Swing.

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FIG. 2. How to grip club with left hand

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FIG. 3. Showing grip with both hands

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FIG. 4. Illustrating overlap

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FIG. 5. Stance for driver

THE SWING

BEFORE trying to swing a club, hold your open left hand in the position shown in Fig. 9, which represents its position when holding a club, then swing it slowly and naturally to the right shoulder. From there swing it slowly and comfortably forward, past the original position, until it is in line with the left shoulder. Make sure that the positions of it exactly correspond with those in Figures 10 and 11. It must not correspond with Figures 12 and 13, for then your swing will be unnatural. You will note that as the arm swings to the extreme right, as shown, the wrist automatically turns over. You do not have to think of turning it; it turns naturally. The same principle applies exactly

to the golf swing (see Figs. 14 and 15, which correspond with 10 and 11). It is so natural that it seems unnecessary to learn it at all.

Inasmuch as the whole secret of success in golf—if indeed it can be called a secret—depends on the swing, the student would do well to take plenty of time to it, and to give it his most careful study.

At first no ball should be used and the clubhead should not be raised higher than horizontal (see Fig. 16). If this is done correctly, the movement will be found to correspond exactly with the experiment just made with the open hand.

Begin by taking a wooden club, place the clubhead on the ground, take your grip and stance as already shown. Keep the hands well down as shown in Fig. 17 and not pushed out as shown in Fig. 18. Then begin

very slowly to move the clubhead backward. This is done by slightly turning (not bending) the left wrist and at the same moment allowing the left forearm to move slowly backward (see Fig. 19). Be careful to let the first movement be made with the left, and not the right hand. Care should also be taken to keep both feet and heels firmly on the ground.

Nothing should move except the arms, and simultaneously with the backward movement the wrists and forearms should turn, so that when club is horizontal, the clubhead points straight upward (see Fig. 16).

It is most important that the turning of the wrists and forearms (this is called pronating) should begin exactly simultaneously with the first movement of the clubhead. Neither

the wrists nor the arms should move before the other; they must both begin moving at exactly the same moment. It is vitally important that the wrist should not bend (or break).

Before going further, let me again impress on the reader the extreme importance of these two points—the two most important in the entire golf decalogue: first, the proper pronating, or turning of the wrists, and forearms away from the ball; and second, the keeping of the wrist perfectly straight and never allowing it to break. Get clearly into your mind the difference between turning the wrist, and breaking it. The one is vital, the other is fatal (see Fig. 16, which is correct, and Figs. 20 and 21 which are incorrect).

After having taken the club back properly so that when horizontal,

the head points straight upward, take it slowly down, past the original position until it is again horizontal, in front. Again, if correctly done, the clubhead will point upward.

I would recommend doing this over and over again, until it comes quite naturally, being sure all the time that when in horizontal position the clubhead points upward, also that both feet and heels remain firmly on the ground and that nothing moves, except hands, wrists, and arms. After continuing for a time, swinging slowly and easily backward and forward, and not letting the club go higher than horizontal, try to get the hands and club a little higher, being careful, meanwhile, to keep both feet and heels firmly on the ground and not to allow body or head to move. It will be found that you cannot do this without

moving something. Then you must allow the left knee to bend inward. This will necessitate raising the left heel, and allowing the left foot to rest on the inside of the ball of the foot. See that the knee bends inward and not forward. Above all, let this entire movement be as natural and comfortable as possible. There must be nothing forced or uncomfortable about the swing.

When you get to the top of the back swing (see Fig. 22) be careful that the grip of the left hand is not loosened, but, while keeping the fingers tightly closed on handle, allow the wrist just enough flexibility to "give" a little bit. The weight of the clubhead will do this if you will only allow it, and by allowing it you will avoid an unnatural stiffness of wrist which is always a disadvantage. At first it may seem a little difficult

to keep a firm finger grip without making the wrist absolutely rigid but with a little practice it will become quite natural.

At the top of back swing the club should be horizontal, with the head pointing straight down (see Fig. 22).

In the case of wooden clubs, the player should keep in mind the fact that the ball should be swept away, rather than hit. Having this in mind, let the club swing down, sweeping the ball with it as it goes.

It is a recognized fact in connection with the golf swing that the club will come down in the same arc in which it is taken back, therefore no thought need be given the down stroke at all, but for the same reason it is doubly important to be very careful with the back swing.

Do not think of how the club is

coming down nor of the follow through, but only of sweeping the ball away.

If the back swing has been properly made, all of these things will take care of themselves.

With regard to the follow through, do not try to force it, nor to check it. Just be natural and it will take care of itself (see Fig. 23).

Let me here emphasize the extreme simplicity of this method of teaching as compared with the usual method in which as much attention is paid to the down swing and follow through, etc., etc., as to the back swing; whereas I claim that if the back swing is properly made, no thought need be given the others.

If this is true—and I have proved it to my entire satisfaction—just think how much easier the game will be to learn and how much less

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FIG. 6. Stance for iron club

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FIG. 9. Natural position of open hand

trouble it will be to correct any faults which may develop!

After the swing has been made completely it is advisable to make, say, half a dozen complete swings, then start as though to make another, but stop this time when club is horizontal; see whether feet are on ground, with the weight on the heels, and whether club-head points straight up, If so, you are correct; if not, something is wrong and you had better start all over again. All this should be done for some time before a ball is used at all.

Note very carefully that the first movement is with the hands, wrists, and arms only, and that the left is the controlling hand; being careful that wrist turns but does not break.

IF YOU will refer to the chapter on the Stance, you will note that for mid-iron and jigger shots the right foot is rather more advanced, or, in other words, the stance is more open. The result of this, or rather the reason for this, is that the swing should be a little more upright.

If the correct stance is adopted, no thought need be given to the more upright swing, because with the more open stance the swing must naturally be more upright; so here, all that is necessary is to change the stance and to keep in mind the idea that in this case the shot is not so much a sweep as in the case of the wooden clubs, but rather more of a hit, due to the difference in stance and the consequent more upright swing.

For iron shots the same care is required with the back swing as with wood, the only difference being that the wrists are just a little firmer but not rigid. Hands low, turning of wrists, and movement of arms start simultaneously, and when the club is horizontal the clubhead should point upward. The club should be held firmly in the left hand throughout the entire shot and care should be taken to avoid breaking the wrist. Where less than a full shot is required the swing is not quite so full.

FOR very full mashie shots the stance and swing are the same as for the mid iron and jigger.

Regarding pitch shots; if you will again refer to the chapter on the Stance and to Fig. 7, you will note that for these shots the right foot is still more advanced than in the case of mid iron and jigger, and consequently the swing is more upright. The same methods hold good in making the shot, with an additional warning against allowing the wrist to break.

For the reason that a great many pitch shots require much less than a full swing, there is frequently an inclination to make the shot too much with the wrist, so that allowing

the wrists to break should be *particularly* guarded against (see Figs. 16 and 17). Here, also, it is most important to keep the hands low in addressing the ball.

THE foregoing chapters give in detail complete instructions on golf, including grip, stance, and swing; and embrace all of the clubs from driver to mashie.

Of course there are many elaborations on nearly all of the shots described, such as intentional slicing and pulling, squeeze shots, push shots, etc., but as the whole idea of this book is to emphasize the simplicity of the game and of this particular method of teaching, it is not my intention to go into details regarding any of the fancy shots.

An excellent game of golf can be played without them; and the great majority of players would be far better off to leave them alone.

However, I wish to say that there

is nothing in this simplified method of teaching that will in any way interfere with the more ambitious player who later on wishes to go into these technical shots.

What I have dealt with are fundamentals, and, no matter what kind of a shot you wish to play, you cannot get away from them.

COMMON FAULTS AND THEIR REMEDY

WHEN advocating anything radically different from what people have become accustomed to, it is very difficult to write convincingly. If one could only meet and talk to each individual reader, and thereby hear and answer any arguments he might make, the work of convincing him would be made very much easier.

In this chapter, however, a better opportunity of reasoning with my critics is given than in any other part of the book, and in this reasoning I will endeavor to adhere closely to "cause and effect" and to connect them with my methods.

How often, for instance, upon developing a slice, have you been told

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FIG. 10. Natural position

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FIG. 11. Natural position

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Fig. 12. Unnatural and wrong position

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FIG. 13. Unnatural and wrong position

that you were drawing your club-head across the ball at the moment of impact; and advised to correct this by following through—or something to that effect—instead of trying to discover what *caused* you to draw your arms in.

Working from the knowledge that the forward swing must be in the same arc as the back swing, and having discovered something wrong in the forward swing, it stands to reason that your back swing was wrong also; and inasmuch as therein lies the *cause* of your trouble, there also lies the remedy.

Your forward swing was wrong *because* your back swing made it wrong; therefore, correct your back swing, and your forward swing and follow-through will take care of themselves.

The most common faults of the

golfer are slicing, pulling, topping, etc.

I shall deal with each of these in turn and shall see if I cannot find a logical explanation of and remedy for them.

SLICING

THE commonly accepted reason of the average golf slice is drawing the clubhead across the line of play at the moment of impact. For this I give below several reasons, all of which I classify as "effects," and in each instance I lead back to the fundamental "cause"—the start of the clubhead from the ball in the back swing:

(a) Drawing head and body up and back from ball, due to standing too near.

(b) Swaying. If you start back from the ball with arms and wrists stiff, keeping the clubhead straight without pronating, the natural thing to do is to sway to your right foot,

because everything is stiff and something must give way. The result of this is that on the down swing you sway forward to the left foot.

If, on the other hand, you start by turning (not bending) your wrists and at same time start the forearm, you are in an easy, comfortable position and there is no stiffness nor inclination to sway.

(c) Moving the head (or taking your eye off the ball) is very often the same as swaying. Most frequently it is due to a quick, jerky back swing. This can be caused only by the wrists being too stiff. If you turn the wrist and forearm away from the ball properly, the start cannot be stiff or jerky, and there is nothing to cause a sudden lifting of the head.

(d) Left hand too loose, allowing right hand to overpower it, which

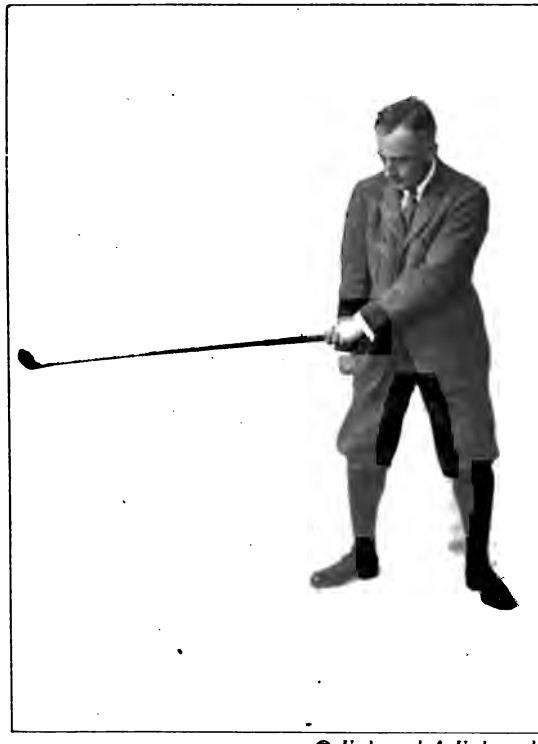

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Fig. 14. Correct position, corresponds with Fig. 10

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FIG. 15. Correct position corresponds with Fig. 11

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FIG. 16. Correct horizontal position

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FIG. 17. Correct stance. Note position of hands

in drawing the club away from the ball causes the left wrist to break. It is very important that the wrist be turned—not bent.

PULLING

PULLING is very often a case of turning the wrist over at the moment of impact. This is the result of over pronating (or turning the wrist too much) in leaving the ball on the back swing. The result of over pronating on the back swing is that you must also turn the wrist too much in the down swing in order to meet the ball squarely—and when you do this it is impossible to check the turning of the wrist at the moment you hit the ball. The consequence is that the wrist continues to turn over and either you pull badly or else you smother (or top) the ball.

If you find you are pulling, take a few very slow swings—see that the back movement and the turning of

the wrists and forearms start at exactly the same moment, and that you are not over-pronating, and see also that you are not gripping too tightly with the right hand, as this is a frequent cause of pulling.

TOPPING

TOPPING is frequently caused by dropping the right shoulder, due to the fact that either the wrists or the grip of the left hand, or both, are too loose at the top of the back swing. The result of this is that on the downward movement the club gives the impression of being too heavy, and the shoulder is allowed to drop. This causes the clubhead to strike the ground several inches behind the ball, with the result that it is badly topped.

Another frequent cause of topping is lifting the club too abruptly from the ball in the back swing, causing the wrist to break. This is apt to cause the clubhead to be brought down on top of the ball, and consequently to hit it down into the

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FIG. 18. Incorrect stance. Note position of hands

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FIG. 21. Incorrect back swing showing wrist "broken"

ground, thereby causing a bad "top."

If you find yourself topping, see that your grip is right, and that you are pronating properly, i.e., starting slowly back from ball—the back movement and the turning of the wrists and forearms starting simultaneously.

NO BOOK on golf can be considered complete which does not include a chapter on Putting. I shall, therefore, outline my ideas on the subject.

Many people claim that putters are born and not made, and that putting is an art which cannot be taught but which comes to one naturally. There undoubtedly is something in this opinion, and it cannot be denied that some people are what might be called natural putters; but they are comparatively few—so few, in fact, that they need hardly be considered here.

There are some fundamentals that even a so-called natural putter must consider, and to these I wish to give special attention. In addition to these, there are a few suggestions as

to grip, stance, etc., which, while not perhaps essential, may be of some assistance.

The Grip:

Putting is as nearly as possible a one-hand shot, that is to say complete control of club is kept in one hand and the other is used only to help to balance and guide the club. If you try to divide the control equally between the hands, the result is stiff and what might be described as "wooden." Some people advocate right-hand control and many of them attain considerable success—I putt entirely with the left and attribute my success in this department of the game to this fact.

The manner of gripping the club has a great deal to do with the control, and the fewer fingers of the right hand that grip the club the

more the control is likely to be thrown to the left hand. For this reason I advocate two fingers of the right hand overlapping the first two fingers of the left. In this way, only the first and second fingers and thumb of the right hand are on the shaft. The thumbs of both hands should be down the centre of the shaft. Now grip the club firmly but not rigidly with the left hand and not quite so tightly with the right.

The Stance:

Some people play the ball well off the left foot, with the weight almost entirely on the left; others reverse this, keeping the weight on the right; while others compromise by keeping the weight equally distributed on both feet and playing the ball off the centre. While it is largely a matter of choice, my prefer-

ence is to keep the weight almost equally distributed but rather more on the left, with the ball opposite the left instep. The right foot should be slightly advanced, with toe pointing at right angles to the hole. The left toe should point toward the hole (see Fig. 24.)

The knees should be slightly bent, and the body bent from the waist—the ball should be about 12 or 13 inches from the left foot. The most important part of the stance is the position of the arms—the right elbow should rest lightly against the body, while the left should point well toward the hole. Left elbow out, right elbow in (see Fig. 25). This will throw the hands well forward.

The Stroke:

It is absolutely essential that the stroke be made entirely with the

wrists and that the left hand remain in complete control of the club. Start the stroke with the wrists only, not the forearms, and let all the power come from the left hand. Keep the head of the putter as close to the ground as possible. The body should be kept absolutely still —and if the movement starts correctly from the *wrists* there will be no inclination to move the body. Care should be taken in hitting the ball to avoid pinching the thumb and first finger of right hand. This is a very natural inclination and should be guarded against as it takes control away from the left hand, and the result is more a "jab" than a clean hit.

The force of the stroke is regulated by the length of the back swing. The ball must be hit "smartly," not "pushed," not "jabbed," and I

want particularly to emphasize the fact that no follow through is necessary, in fact it should be avoided.

Let me again emphasize the essentials:

1. Position of arms—right elbow in, left elbow out.
2. Use wrists only, and keep clubhead low.
3. Keep the body still.
4. Keep control in the left hand.
5. Do not follow through.

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CONCLUSION

IN THE foregoing chapters I have tried to show a simple but effective way of learning to play the game of golf and of correcting the various faults that are likely to develop from time to time.

If the reader has read any other books on the subject, he cannot fail to be impressed with the extreme simplicity of the method herein described, and, I think, with the reasonableness of my deductions.

Last winter I spent some months as an instructor in the largest indoor golf school in New York (or America). There were a number (at least a dozen) of other professionals engaged, and I had a splendid opportunity to watch not only their methods of teaching, but also their vari-

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FIG. 22. Correct position at top of swing

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FIG. 23. Correct and natural follow through

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FIG. 24. Putting stance. Note position of feet

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FIG. 25. Putting stance. Note position left elbow

ous styles of play. Some used the open, some the square, stance; some used a flat, some a medium, and others an upright, swing. They had various methods of gripping the club, but whatever their method of doing these various things, they all—without an exception—had the same way of starting the club back from the ball, although the effects were very different, owing to different characteristics and physical make-up.

As already stated, the effects were different but the start of the back swing was always the same—the back movement and the turning of the wrists and forearms always started simultaneously and there was no jerkiness—even though some of them had a very quick swing. Their use of it may have been instinctive or subconscious, but it was there, nevertheless.

The simplicity of this principle and rule in golf is its chief charm. It is applicable to all styles of play, whether upright, flat, or medium, and applies to all the shots in your bag. Analyze everything from the back swing. Never work to improve "effects," always go back to "cause."

Briefly, my theory—which is now no longer a theory, but a fact, proved demonstrable, through years of experience—may be summed up as follows:

With grip and stance properly adjusted, be sure you start your clubhead back from ball correctly. Do not jerk, start slowly. Let the backward movement and the turn of the wrists and forearms start at exactly the same moment. Keep control in the left hand. Pronate properly. (And to know when you are doing

this, notice the position of the club-head when club is horizontal). And finally, when you "go off your game," no matter in what respect—whether because of slicing, pulling, topping, whatever it may be—do not try to correct the "effect" but *go back to first principles* and thereby remove the "cause."

THE END

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